

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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## BREEDERS OF TIGERS, PHEASANTS, AND OTHER ENDANGERED SPECIES TO BE HELPED BY PROPOSED REGULATIONS

Zoos, circuses, game bird breeders, and other persons who breed endangered species in captivity will be helped by new regulations proposed by Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director, announced today.

The regulations, proposed recently in the Federal Register, simplify the process of transferring ownership of certain endangered species which are being bred in captivity. Sixteen species, four of them native to the United States, are found to be bred extensively enough in this country that they are being proposed as "Captive, Self-Sustaining Populations." Interested persons have until July 6, 1976, to comment on the proposal.

"These breeders play a vital role in the conservation of endangered species," Schreiner said. "In fact, if it weren't for them, some species that are no longer found in the wild would be extinct. These captive populations not only provide gene pools which, of themselves, are worthy of preservation; they also make possible the reestablishment and rejuvenation of wild populations as well as man's continued, legitimate use and enjoyment of the species without jeopardizing its existence.

"For example, there are almost 300 tigers in captivity in the United States. Of these, only about 10 came from the wild--all the rest were bred here and more than 25 individuals have been able to breed them."

(over)

The proposal recognizes that a species may be critically endangered in the wild, but through the efforts of zoos or other propagators, is being bred in captivity in such numbers that a captive population capable of perpetuating itself has been established. In most cases, the continued existence of that "Captive, Self-Sustaining Population" is dependent upon the ability of institutions to quickly transfer ownership of breeding stock and surplus animals among themselves. Effective husbandry requires that breeding season, weather, compatibility of animals, and other uncontrollable factors be considered in movement of animals.

The proposed regulations would determine that "Captive, Self-Sustaining Populations" of the following endangered species have been attained in the United States: tiger, leopard, jaguar, ring-tailed lemur, black lemur, brown-eared pheasant, Edward's pheasant, Humes pheasant (bar-tailed pheasant), Mikado pheasant, Palawan peacock pheasant, Swinhoe pheasant, white-eared pheasant, Nene goose (Hawaiian goose), Hawaiian duck, Laysan teal (Laysan duck), masked bobwhite (masked bobwhite quail). The regulations would set up a greatly simplified system of permitting qualified persons to buy or sell these species for purposes that would not result in the import, export, or death of the animal or the loss of its reproductive ability. The regulations also provide for a recordkeeping system sufficient to enable the Service to monitor the well-being of the captive populations.

The Service considered data provided largely by the American Game Bird Breeders Cooperative Federation and the International Species Inventory System of the American Association of Zoological Parks and Aquariums in making these proposals.

The proposal also identifies some of the activities the Service feels would enhance the survival of endangered species and specifies the circumstances under which permits may be issued to use endangered species for, conservation exhibition, or to establish "pools" of animals which are surplus to existing scientific or propagation needs. Criteria are also set forth for permits allowing the euthanization of any endangered animal which is terminally ill, critically injured, or senile.